THE DELUGE

By DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS, *Author of "THE CAST," etc*

CHAPTER XXIX.—Continued.

The first news I got was that Bill Van Nest had disappeared. As soon as the Stick Exchange opened, National Coal became the feature. But, instead of "wash sales," Roebuck, Langdon and Melville were themselves, through various brokers, buying the stocks in large quantities to keep the prices up. My next letter was as brief as my first philippic:

"Bill Van Nest is at the Hotel Frankfort, Newark, under the name of Thomas Lowry. He was in telephonic communication with President Melville, of the National Industrial bank, twice yesterday.

"The underwriters of the National Coal company's new issues, frightened by yesterday's exposure, have compelled Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Mowbray Langdon and Mr. Melville themselves to buy. So, yesterday, those three gentlemen bought with real money, with their own money, large quantities of stocks which are worth less than half what they paid for them.

"They will continue to buy these stocks so long as the public holds aloof. They dare not let the prices slump. They hope that this storm will blow over, and that then the investing public will forget and will relieve them of their load."

I had added: "But this storm won't blow over. It will become a cyclone." I struck that out. "No prophecy," said I to myself. "Your rule, iron-clad, must be—facts, always facts; only facts."

The gambling section of the public took my hint and rushed into the market; the burden of protecting the underwriters was doubled, and more and more of the hoarded loot was disgorged. That must have been a costly day—for, 10 minutes after the Stock Exchange closed, Roebuck sent for me.

"My compliments to him," said I to his messenger, "but I am too busy. I'll be glad to see him here, however.

"You know he dares not come to you," said the messenger, Schilling, president of the National Manufactured Food company, sometimes called the Poison Trust. "If he did, and it were to get out, there'd be a panic."

"Probably," replied I with a shrug. "That's no affair of mine. I'm not responsible for the rotten conditions which these so-called financiers have produced, and I shall not be disturbed by the crash which must come."

Schilling gave me a genuine look of mingled pity and admiration. "I suppose you know what you're about," said he, "but I think you're making a mistake."

"Thanks, Ned," said I—he had been my head clerk a few years before, and I had got him the chance with Roebuck which he had improved so well. "I'm going to have some fun. Can't live but once."

My "daily letters" had now ceased to be advertisements, had become news, sought by all the newspapers of this country and of the big cities in Great Britain. I could have made a large saving by no longer paying my sixty-odd regular papers for inserting them. But I was looking too far ahead to blunder into that fatal mistake. Instead, I signed a year's contract with each of my papers, they guaranteeing to print my advertisements, I guaranteeing to protect them against loss on libel suits. I organized a dummy news bureau, and through it got contracts with the telegraphic companies. Thus insured against the cutting of my communications with the public, I was ready for the real campaign.

It began with my "History of the National Coal company." I need not repeat that famous history here. I need recall only the main points—how I proved that the common stock was actually worth less than two dollars a share, that the bonds were worth less than twenty-five dollars in the hundred, that both stock and bonds were illegal; my detailed recital of the crimes of Roebuck, Melville and Langdon in wrecking mining properties, in wrecking coal railways, in ejecting American labor and substituting helots from eastern Europe; how they had swindled and lied and bribed; how they had twisted the books of the companies, how they were planning to unload the mass of almost worthless securities at high prices, then to get from under the market and let the bonds and stocks drop down to where they could buy them in on terms that would yield them more than 250 per cent on the actual capital invested. Less and dearer coal; lower wages and more ignorant laborers; enormous profits absorbed without mercy into a few pockets.

On the day the seventh chapter of this history appeared, the telegraph companies notified me that they would transmit no more of my matter. They feared the consequences in libel suits, explained Moseby, general manager of one of the companies.

"But I guarantee to protect you," said I. "I will give bond in any amount you ask."

"We can't take the risk, Mr. Blacklock," replied he. The twinkle in his eye told me why, and also that he, like every one else in the country except the clique, was in sympathy with me.

My lawyers found an honest judge, and I got an injunction that compelled the companies to transmit under my contracts. I suspended the "History" for one day, and sent out in place of it an account of this attempt to shut me off from the public. "Hereafter," said I, in the last paragraph in my letter, "I shall end each day's chapter with a forecast of what the next day's chapter is to be. If for any reason it fails to appear, the public will know that somebody has been coerced by Roebuck, Melville & Co."

XXX.

ANITA'S SECRET.

That afternoon—or, was it the next?—I happened to go home early. I have never been able to keep alive anger against any one. My anger against Anita had long ago died away, had been succeeded by regret and remorse that I had let my nerves, or whatever the accursed cause was, whirl me into such an outburst. Not that I regretted having rejected what I still felt was insulting to me and degrading to her; simply that my manner should have been different. There was no necessity or excuse for violence in showing her that I would not, could not, accept from gratitude what only love has the right to give. And I had long been casting about for some way to apologize—not easy to do, when her distant manner toward me made it difficult for me to find even the necessary commonplaces to "keep up appearances" before the servants on the few occasions on which we accidentally met.

But, as I was saying, I came up from the office and stretched myself on the lounge in my private room adjoining the library. I had read myself into a doze, when a servant brought me a card. I glanced at it as it lay upon his extended tray. "General Monson," I read aloud. "What does the damned rascal want?" I asked.

The servant smiled. He knew as well as I how Monson, after I dismissed him with a present of six months' pay, had given the newspapers the story—or, rather, his version of the story—of my efforts to educate myself in the "arts and graces of a gentleman."

"Mr. Monson says he wishes to see you particularly, sir," said he.

"Well—I'll see him," said I. I despised him too much to dislike him, and I thought he might possibly be in want. But that notion vanished the instant I set eyes upon him. He was obviously at the very top of the wave. "Hello, Monson," was my greeting, in it no reminder of his treachery.

"Howdy, Blacklock," said he. "I've come on a little errand for Mrs. Langdon." Then, with that nasty grin of his: "You know, I'm looking after things for her since the bust-up."

"No, I didn't know," said I curtly, suppressing my instant curiosity. "What does Mrs. Langdon want?"

"To see you—for just a few minutes—whenever it is convenient."

"If Mrs. Langdon has business with me, I'll see her at my office," said I. She was one of the fashionables that had got herself into my black books by her treatment of Anita since the break with the Ellerslys.

"She wishes to come to you here—this afternoon, if you are to be at home. She asked me to say that her business is important—and very private."

I hesitated, but I could think of no good excuse for refusing. "I'll be here an hour," said I. "Good day."

He gave me no time to change my mind. Something—perhaps it was his curious expression as he took himself off—made me begin to regret. The more I thought of the matter, the less I thought of my having made any civil concession to a woman who had acted so badly toward Anita and myself. He had not been gone a quarter of an hour before I went to Anita in her sitting room. Always, the instant I entered the outer door of her part of our house, that powerful, intoxicating fascination that she had for me began to take possession of my senses. It was in every garment she wore. It seemed to linger in any place where she had been, for a long time after she left it. She was at a small desk by the window, was writing letters.

"May I interrupt?" said I. "Monson was here a few minutes ago—from Mrs. Langdon. She wants to see me. I told him I would see her here. Then it occurred to me that perhaps I had been too good-natured. What do you think?"

"'FOOL!' SHE FLARED AT ME. OH, THE FOOLS WOMEN MAKE OF MEN,'"

I could not see her face, but only the back of her head, and the loose coils of magnetic hair and the white nape of her graceful neck. As I began to speak, she stopped writing, her pen suspended over the sheet of paper. After I ended there was a long silence.

"I'll not see her," said I. "I don't quite understand why I yielded." And I turned to go.

"Wait—please," came from her abruptly.

Another long silence. Then I: "If she comes here, I think the only person who can properly receive her is you."

"No—you must see her," said Anita at last. And she turned round in her chair until she was facing me. Her expression—I can not describe it. I can only say that it gave me a sense of impending calamity.

"I'd rather not—much rather not," said I.

"I particularly wish you to see her," she replied, and she turned back to her writing. I saw her pen poised as if she were about to begin; but she did not begin—and I felt that she would not. With my mind shadowed with vague dread, I left that mysterious stillness, and went back to the library.

It was not long before Mrs. Langdon was announced. There are some women to whom a haggard look is becoming; she is one of them. She was much thinner than when I last saw her; instead of her former restless, petulant, suspicious expression, she now looked tragically sad. "May I trouble you to close the door?" said she, when the servant had withdrawn.

I closed the door.

"I've come," she began, without seating herself, "to make you as unhappy, I fear, as I am. I've hesitated long before coming. But I am desperate. The one hope I have left is that you and I between us may be able to—to—that you and I may be able to help each other."

I waited.

"I suppose there are people," she went on, "who have never known what it was to—really to care for some one else. They would despise me for clinging to a man after he has shown me that—that his love has ceased."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Langdon," I interrupted. "You apparently think your husband and I are intimate friends. Before you go any further I must disabuse you of that idea."

She looked at me in open astonishment. "You do not know why my husband has left me?"

"Until a few minutes ago, I did not know that he had left you," I said. "And I do not wish to know why."

Her expression of astonishment changed to mockery. "Oh!" she sneered. "Your wife has fooled you into thinking it a one-sided affair. Well, I tell you, she is as much to blame as he—more. For he did love me when he married me; did love me until she got him under her spell again."

I thought I understood. "You have been misled, Mrs. Langdon," said I gently, pitying her as the victim of her insane jealousy. "You have——"

"Ask your wife," she interrupted angrily. "Hereafter, you can't pretend ignorance. For I'll at least be revenged. She failed utterly to trap him into marriage when she was a poor girl, and ——"

"Before you go any further," said I coldly, "let me set you right. My wife was at one time engaged to your husband's brother, but——"

"Tom?" she interrupted. And her laugh made me bite my lip. "So she told you that! I don't see how she dared. Why, everybody knows that she and Mowbray were engaged, and that he broke it off to marry me."

All in an instant everything that had been confused in my affairs at home and down town became clear. I understood why I had been pursued relentlessly in Wall street; why I had been unable to make the least impression on the barriers between Anita and myself. You will imagine that some terrible emotion at once dominated me. But this is not a romance; only the veracious chronicle of certain husman beings. My first emotion was—relief that it was not Tom Langdon. "I ought to have known she couldn't care for him," said I to myself. I, contending with Tom L[illegible] woman's love had always made me shrink. But Mowbray—that was vastly different. My respect for myself and for Anita rose.

"No," said I to Mrs. Langdon, "my wife did not tell me, never spoke of it. What I said to you was purely a guess of my own. I had no interest in the matter—and haven't. I have absolute confidence in my wife. I feel ashamed that you have provoked me into saying so." I opened the door.

"I am not going yet," said she angrily. "Yesterday morning Mowbray and she were riding together in the Riverside drive. Ask her groom."

"What of it?" said I. Then, as she did not rise, I rang the bell. When the servant came, I said: "Please tell Mrs. Blacklock that Mrs. Langdon is in the library—and that I am here, and gave you the message."

As soon as the servant was gone, she said: "No doubt she'll lie to you. These women that steal other women's property are usually clever at fooling their own silly husbands."

"I do not intend to ask her," I replied. "To ask her would be an insult.

She made no comment beyond a scornful toss of the head. We both had our gaze fixed upon the door through which Anita would enter. When she finally did appear, I, after one glance at her, turned—it must have been triumphantly—upon her accuser. I had not doubted, but where is the faith that is not the stronger for confirmation? And confirmation there was in the very atmosphere round that stately, still figure. She looked calmly, first at Mrs. Langdon, then at me.

"I sent for you," said I, "because I thought that you, rather than I, should request Mrs. Langdon to leave your house."

At that Mrs. Langdon was on her feet, and blazing. "Fool!" she flared at me. "Oh, the fools women make of men!" Then to Anita: "You—you —— But no, I must not permit you to drag me down to your level. Tell your husband—tell him that you were riding with my husband in the Riverside drive yesterday.

I stepped between her and Anita. "My wife will not answer you," said I. "I hope, Madam, you will spare us the necessity of a painful scene. But leave you must—at once."

She looked wildly round, clasped her hands, suddenly burst into tears. If she had but known, she could have had her own way after that, without any attempt from me to oppose her. For she was evidently unutterably wretched—and no one knew better than I the sufferings of unreturned love. But she had given me up; slowly, sobbing, she left the room I opening the door for her and closing it behind her.

"I almost broke down myself," said I to Anita. "Poor woman! How can you be so calm? You women in your relations with each other are a mystery."

(To be Continued.)

ADMIRAL DEWEY OPPOSES SURRENDER OF ISLANDS

Regards Philippines as Gateway to the Orient, and an Aid in Maintaining the Open Door Policy.

Washington—Admiral Dewey strongly resents the proposition that has been discussed in a more or less academic way to surrender the Philippines, which, of all men, he was a leading factor in bringing under the American flag. In an interview, the admiral sets out the reasons which impel him to insist upon the retention of the islands. The strong point of his argument is not based upon the military or naval importance of the islands, but upon the great value, present and prospective, of the Philippines to America in the extension of our trade with the orient.

The admiral says: "Abandon the Philippines? I don't believe our country will ever do that. Certainly it should not, because it has altogether too much at stake. It is only our control over the Philippines that makes it possible for us to insist upon the open door in the east, toward which our diplomacy has been directed for years. We want our share of the enormous commerce of the east and we can't keep the door open for it unless we hold the islands. Why did Spain for 200 years dominate the commerce of the orient? Just because she had the bay and harbor of Manila as a great commercial and naval base. That base can be just as useful to us commercially as it was to Spain. For ten years every strong European nation has been trying to get a foothold for commercial and naval purposes in the far east. Through the fortunes of war the United States obtained the best position possible, giving us superior commercial advantages over the nations. What sort of a common sense would it be for us to give up such a position?

"Suppose we should dispose of the Philippines and Japan should acquire them. See how the islands stretch along the coast. Here are the Philippines and Formosa. If Japan had them she could command every gateway to the orient and the United States would be completely shut out. Every one concedes that the orient is the future great field for the principal commercial operations of the world. We ought to be the leaders, but we must at least have a share in the enterprise, and in order to do so we must maintain the position we have occupied. I think it is plain that we must have a commercial base such as Manila, and then in order to protect our commerce we must have a naval base, and at Subig bay such a base is being developed."

MORE FIGHTING IN MOROCCO.

General Drude Resumes Offensive and Burns Moorish Camps.

Casablanca.—Negotiations for the cessation of hostilities having failed, General Drude on Sunday resumed the offensive and burned the Moorish camps at Sidi Brahim, south of Casablanca, and dispersed the tribesmen, who offered but little resistance. These operations were chiefly notable for a brilliant forced march of the French troops, who covered forty kilometers inside of twelve hours. The expedition, consisting of 2,000 infantry, with a detail of cavalry, artillery and native auxiliaries, left camp before dawn and formed into two hollow squares, one behind the other. In this formation they marched some distance under the cover of darkness and unobserved by the tribesmen. A heavy morning sea-fog came up at daybreak and forced a half hour's halt, during which shots fired by the advance guards gave the alarm to the enemy.

King of Siam is Blowing Himself in Germany.

Homburg, Germany.—King Chulalongkorn of Siam on Saturday invited all Homburg to join in celebrating his birthday. Champagne and red and white wines of other descriptions were served at the Kurhaus without any limit. It is presumed that the celebration of his birthday will cost $250,000, as the managers of the Kurhaus have been hastily gathering in wines by the carload from the neighboring cities. It is estimated that the king of Siam has already spent $1,500,000 in Germany alone.

Wrecked Fishermen in Distress.

Seattle, Wash.—United States Senator S. H. Piles has telegraphed direct to President Roosevelt asking the executive to send a revenue cutter to Bristol Bay to rescue the crew of 160 white fishermen and 200 Chinese said to have been wrecked there when the fishing boat John Currier went ashore on the rocks on August 9. A party was gotten away to send word of the distress of nearly 400 men to appeal for aid. The men had supplies sufficient to last them for thirty days, but that time has expired.

Driving Out the Trusts.

Vicksburg, Miss.—Chancellor Hicks late Saturday afternoon declared the Gulf Compress company, which controls thirty-one compresses in the south, sixteen of which are located in Mississippi, an illegal trust, and gave the corporation one year in which to wind up its business in the state and withdraw. He denied the application for a receiver. This decision is a victory for District Attorney James D. Thomas, who less than a week ago filed the suit asking that a receiver be appointed and that it be declared a combine in restraint of trade.

NEWS SUMMARY

Over 177,000 British and Irish immigrants came to United States and Canada during the past year.

King Frederick August of Saxony was thrown from his horse in the maneuvers near Dresden and was slightly injured.

It has been reported to the state board of health that twenty cases of beri beri have developed among Japanese laborers at Alva, Neb.

The dock laborers' strike at Antwerp is ended, a mixed commission having been selected to examine and pass upon the question of wages.

Final figures for the new state of Oklahoma show a total population of 1,141,042, Oklahoma having 721,141 inhabitants and Indian Territory 629,901.

Minister Urgarte, of Honduras, has informed the department of state that on Sept. 15 the constitutional regime was re-established in the republic of Honduras.

The Nebraska supreme court has handed down a decision holding that a person cannot devise an interest in a timber claim unless a patent has been issued.

Panic-stricken when a barge in which they were crossing the Allegheny river began to sink, six workman of Pittsburg jumped into the river and were drowned.

The United States cruiser squadron from the Asiatic station, consisting of the Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Colorado, have sailed from Honolulu for San Francisco.

The San Domingo congress has passed a resolution delegating to the executive of that government full power and authority to act on the $20,000,000 San Dominican loan contract.

At a session of the international congress of miners at Salzburg, Austria, a resolution was adopted opposing any restriction of the output of coal. The Americans voted affirmatively.

The state board of railroad commissioners has adopted a resolution reducing the maximum passenger fares in South Dakota from 3 to 2½ cents a mile, to become effective October 15.

After chasing people into their homes at the point of a revolver and clearing saloons of patrons, George White, a negro, was shot and killed by Deputy Sheriff Will Blake, of Collinsville, Ill.

H. Czolgosz and his wife, parents of the assassin of President McKinley, have applied to the city charity department of Cleveland, O., for assistance. Czolgosz is 83 and his wife 75 years old.

J. S. Cook, a Southern Pacific brakeman residing in Los Angeles, was instantly killed while trying to board a westbound passenger train at Colton, Cal., on which his wife was returning from the east.

Acting upon the recommendation of Governor Post, the executive council has decided upon compulsory vaccination on the Porto Rican island. Six hundred thousand vaccine points have been ordered.

Edward Richardson, an aeronaut, dropped 2,000 feet to death at the Miami county fair at Troy, N. Y. His parachute broke and he shot to the ground like an arrow, striking on a tree and was killed.

Mrs. Lillian White Grant, a kindergarten teacher in the public schools of Chicago, was found dead in bed at her home, her neck broken by a piece of linen cloth twisted about her throat. The police suspect a colored chore man.

By mortgaging his own and his family's property, State Tax Commissioner John Fitzpatrick, of New Orleans, has raised funds to return $116,000 stolen from the state by Charles E. Letten, a clerk in Fitzpatrick's office.

Two Russians entered a bank at Montreaux, Switzerland, shot and killed the cashier, seized the cash box and fled. A crowd gave chase. The robbers fired at and wounded four of their pursuers before they were captured.

Under the will of the late Thomas R. Bier, treasurer of the grand lodge of Masons of Pennsylvania, his entire estate, valued at about $2,500,000, is devised to the credit of the grand lodge of Pennsylvania for the education and support of male orphans of the Master Masons.

In San Francisco the Geary street line has resumed operations for the first time since the strike began several months ago. The company has agreed to pay the city 10 per cent of its gross receipts. No discrimination will be made between union and non-union men.

Five hundred members of the Independent Boot and Shoe Cutters' union of St. Louis have struck for shorter hours and increased wages. All the shoe factories in the city are affected save one, which signed the union agreement.

Ludwig Szczygiel, the Roman Catholic priest from Chicago who has been on trial at Pittsburg for the murder of Andrew and Stephen Starzcynski, brothers, was convicted of murder in the second degree by a jury. The priest claimed he killed the brothers in self defense.

The plans for a new vessel of the Dreadnaught class have been received at Portsmouth, England, accompanied by orders to commence building the warship immediately. Her displacement will be 19,300 tons, 800 tons greater than the newly launched Bellerophon and Temeraire.

Twenty-two out of fifty-eight men who have been on trial by court-martial at Riga, Russia, charged with participating in the revolt in the Baltic province, in 1906, by which the control of this section was wrested from the Russian government for months, have been condemned to death.